

WASHINGTON LETTER.

Our Correspondence From the National Capital.

Something About the Letter Writers of the Daily Press-Portraits of McKee, Northoff and Wright, Etc.

WASHINGTON, May 29.—The Washington correspondents are attracting quite their usual share of attention just now. One or two of them have been banished from the White House for the crime of having published a statement that Miss Cleveland had quarreled with her brother, about the use of wine at the White House, and was not going to return. The New York Graphic has published a page full of the faces of the Washington correspondents, and the Washington Critic is "doing" them up in comical cuts. They are a peculiar feature of Washington life. They are ubiquitous, and are an interesting study. There are scores of them, perhaps hundreds. Nobody knows just how many



There is, for it is difficult to tell in some cases just where the correspondent ends and the Government employe begins. For it is a well-known fact that lots of them hold Government positions at the same time that they are serving the press a thousand miles away. A few of them succeed in carrying this double load gracefully and well, but these are exceptions to the general rule. In most cases the correspondent who takes a position in the department soon becomes a department machine and loses his grip as a correspondent. Yet there are so many who do hold positions under the Government and at the same time do more or less newspaper work that it is hard to count them. There is, too, another reason why it is so difficult to count them. The reason is about the same that made it difficult for the Irishman to count his pig because it tricked about so. They think about a good deal; this month they are here, next month they are away. There are, of course, a good many papers that do not want a Washington correspondent during the session of Congress, and many of these send some of their men here to do this work and withdraw them at the end of the session. This is bad policy except for the man who is sent, but the paper, perhaps, don't know it. The last



is that few men are worth much as news gatherers in Washington during their first year here. One of the oldest and most successful correspondents in Washington, whose portrait is by the way, given in this correspondence, said to your correspondent long ago that he did not consider that he was of any particular value to newspapers until he had been in the city three years of his experience here. So it is a mistake, in most cases, that the paper out of Washington sends out a new man here merely a session of Congress. But they do it, and the result is, that there are numerous new faces among the correspondents, and numerous changes, and that the correspondents, like the pig farmer, are not worth much so that it is hard to count them.

There are, however, over a hundred of them who can be legitimately counted. Think of it, you who are accustomed to a corps of perhaps a dozen or so of all sorts of men in a city—a hundred or two hundred busy news-gatherers hunting high and low

for news, digging up the records of statesmen, who are always considered a fair target, and combining the results of their labors. Do you wonder that some very odd "news" for there is a great interchange of matter, and when you read this or that item you never know whose is the production it? This is especially true about the same night in some city. So there was a system of interchange of news established in this way. There are not much news before 10 o'clock those anxious to make a good showing of their work were ready to trade with the other afternoon paper men, and the general system of interchange of afternoon news arose, and the "news clearing house" was thus established. An old Washington correspondent told me once that he was dependent on this subject not long since that it was utterly impossible to keep a

piece of news "exclusive" in the morning here. This is strictly true, but it is a fact that there is a great deal more trading in news in the morning than in the evening. On the other hand, it is true that there is not nearly so much rivalry among news purveyors now as there was ten years ago. The world of newspaper correspondents is a curious one, socially. It has its duties and its pleasures, its studies and its relaxations, its social joys and griefs, very much the same as that of any other class. There is an idea that your average correspondent is a conniving and crafty fellow, but this is the exception, not the rule. Most of them have their families; some of them live in their own homes, keep their own books and bundles and have their own cars. It is a thing quite out of the usual order to the minds of most people to see a newspaper reporter passing the plate at church or filling the position of father at one of the high schools. But such things happen in Washington. It is not uncommon to see the names of the wives and daughters of prominent correspondents figuring largely in the columns of the city papers. There are many in person taking part in the doings of the social world. There is, too, more or less social relationship between the families of the correspondents and the families of the officials; others who cultivate the literary circles who turn their attention to the social world of Washington, and others whose acquaintance takes a more conservative line and comprise department people, and even the families of members of Congress. Of the hundred or two of newspaper correspondents who are here, it is probable that more than one-half live in boarding-houses, for so many of them are sent here by their papers on a brief time that it is unprofitable for them to attempt to establish themselves. There are others, however, who live here, who make Washington their permanent home, and who are around the city for a long time after another who have been here for twenty years or more. They have, usually, their homes, some of them rented some of them their own.

There is one peculiarity about the Washington correspondent that is worthy of notice and much to be wondered at—that is, his reluctance to accept anything new as relates to his own personal methods. Persistent seekers after news, there are they, but they are not new in their own line until it is actually forced upon them through recognition by the business world about them. Take the type-writer, for instance. It is universally known that the type-writer is a machine, and yet how much writing to do, yet these men who make their living by writing, who do nothing else from one year's end to another, who are not at all a great relief to the busy day of the writer, who are not at all compelled to write more or less by hand, reject it. There are a few who are now beginning its use; a very few who have used and commended it for years; but they are, together, a very small percentage of the whole. The labor-saving instrument, the telephone. Here it connects you with the White House, the home of every Cabinet officer, the headquarters of every official who is always willing to answer any inquiry you may desire to make, the Capitol, the Postoffice, the hotels, the local newspaper offices, the telegraph offices, and every other place where you may wish to find the fingers of your two hands all of the newspaper correspondents who have it at residence or office. The duty of the correspondent requires him to travel about the city, to visit all the departments, the hotels, the Capitol, the White House, and often the residence of some official, besides visiting his own office occasionally. Here in Washington, there is no method of travel more popular, more swift, more comfortable, more inexpensive or more time and labor-saving, than by bicycle or tricycle. The capital streets are as smooth as a floor, and extend all over the city. You may go by the "wheel" in any direction, with the utmost ease and comfort, day or night, after the cars have stopped, or you may go by the "wheel" if you save time, labor and money, and make that which otherwise would be a drudgery a pleasure. The bicycle is sufficiently popular that the person who rides it is considered an advance agent of progress, and thereby, for there are hundreds and hundreds, probably thousands, in the city and to be seen on the streets at all hours. Department officials, business men, physicians, and people of all classes ride them, and many ladies use the tricycle with grace and ease, yet with all of these recommendations and practical advantages which the machine offers the newspaper man, it is rejected. He sticks to his horse or to his tricycle, and who ride the bicycle, and but one of these who makes it of constant practical use in his business. It seems odd that these men, who are so advanced in their knowledge of the bicycle, who may only make success by hard and constant work, who lead public opinion in many things of great importance, who claim to be progressive in many things, should reject the bicycle, and who would aid in their own success, simply because they are comparatively new, and because their fathers and grandfathers before them did not use them.

It is not uncommon to find two or three or four or more correspondents occupying the same office. Correspondents are not at all averse to interchange of news and for division of expenses, but the result is not always satisfactory in every particular. Of course not all men who come to Washington as correspondents succeed. It takes one sort of talent to succeed in one place and quite another to be successful somewhere else. Often the man who was a successful editor or reporter in some city a thousand miles away is surprised to find himself a failure here. The man who would be successful here must have a large amount of industry, a full measure of common sense, a knowledge of public men and public affairs, both past and present, and a "trace" of that quality designated in the popular and expressive slang to-day as "pull." The man of "pull" must be honest, earnest, untiring, "in" in season and out of season, "truthful," fearless, both as to politicians and as to the views and opinions of his fellow correspondents, and always a gentlemanly key to success as a Washington correspondent may be given in one small word—work.

It was not the intention in this letter of entering upon personalities, and this will not be derogated from except to give the faces of the out of the many widely-known and honored men who have made the name of Washington correspondent an honor to those who wear it. They are E. B. Wright, correspondent of the "Chicago Tribune and Boston Journal," Charles Northoff, the correspondent of the New York Herald, and D. R. McKee, the head of the Associated Press, who may be properly termed successful men, and who are not at all averse to interchange of news and for division of expenses, but the result is not always satisfactory in every particular. Of course not all men who come to Washington as correspondents succeed. It takes one sort of talent to succeed in one place and quite another to be successful somewhere else. Often the man who was a successful editor or reporter in some city a thousand miles away is surprised to find himself a failure here. The man who would be successful here must have a large amount of industry, a full measure of common sense, a knowledge of public men and public affairs, both past and present, and a "trace" of that quality designated in the popular and expressive slang to-day as "pull." The man of "pull" must be honest, earnest, untiring, "in" in season and out of season, "truthful," fearless, both as to politicians and as to the views and opinions of his fellow correspondents, and always a gentlemanly key to success as a Washington correspondent may be given in one small word—work.

Paros Whangdoodle Baxter distinguished himself but once more in the funeral of an aged colored man. "Our deceased" was married four times during his life, said Whangdoodle, "but only one obituary notice as fortunate as to be able to survive him long enough to be present on his obsequies." There is a general system of interchange of afternoon news established in this way. There are not much news before 10 o'clock those anxious to make a good showing of their work were ready to trade with the other afternoon paper men, and the general system of interchange of afternoon news arose, and the "news clearing house" was thus established. An old Washington correspondent told me once that he was dependent on this subject not long since that it was utterly impossible to keep a

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EPIDEMIC OF CRIME.

Accounted for on the Basis of Irrationality.

Human Nature in Its Relation to Crime.

Mr. W. Carr Takes High Ground Upon Which to Base His Philosophy of Accounting for Crime.

Written for the Sunday Sentinel.

The attention of readers of the Sunday Sentinel has been attracted to the "Epidemic of Crime" which Seneca Reser, of Plymouth, and Mr. Stackhouse, of this city, have been discussing at opposite points. These gentlemen seem to be at odds in their conclusions on the subject; but on carefully reading them, it is found that each, in fact, accounts in part for the increase of crime in our day and generation.

If we regard crime as a violation of the social, moral and civil statutes, rather than in the restricted sense of its being simply a sin against the State, we can then see how Mr. Reser's judgment touching Irrationalism and his theory of "perceptions" come into play in explaining the growth of criminality. In this light also will appear the forcefulness of Mr. Stackhouse's notion of impoverishment, and his statistics on the subject. Had these gentlemen multiplied their arguments of causes, even to the extent of enumerating among them special seasons of crime, the result would be the same. The incidents of man's meetings of the people, the immoral atmosphere of large cities, lack of education, the detailing of every feature of crime in the public prints, the unwholesome conditions of family and other conditions favorable to the crystallization of evil in the mind into actual sinfulness, they would still be right in part, and would be accounting for the "Epidemic of Crime." The lawless element, however, would be chiefly in degree only, for the question is almost beyond human compass. When a very pious saint saw in a vision the pathway of man, he declared that the road of crime was a narrow one, and that the road of virtue was a broad one. "O, Lord, who can escape?" Without at all implying belief in visions, the case in question suggests that with the corporeal eye we cannot see the pathway of crime, but that the temptations to crime and sin are more than the light of the clear vision why wrong-doing is epidemic in our midst.

But why is darkness favorable to crime? We can find the answer in the fact that a false conscience can not discern between good and evil, right and wrong, what is to be said of "perceptions"? We have seen that the lawless element are more crime-prone in summer than in winter; more in a bibulous than in an abstemious community; more by males than by females. Under these conditions, the lawless element outstrip the educated in the commission of crime, but in the refinement of sinfulness and in special feats of criminality the learned with no religion are far in advance of every other class. These conditions are not the truth that in human nature largely and in physiological balance of organization we must look in great part for the solution of crime. The lawless element are more crime-prone in summer than in winter; more in a bibulous than in an abstemious community; more by males than by females. 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